

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraphs [0008]-[0013] with the following amended paragraphs [0008]-[0013]:

[0008] According to one aspect of the present invention, ~~as described in claim 1,~~ an oil-impregnated sintered sliding bearing includes: an axis; plural porous sintered compacts joined with each other by sizing; a cavity provided between the sintered compacts at a center portion of the bearing in a direction of the axis; and a gap extending continuously from an end portion of the cavity along the axis and having a width narrower than that of the cavity. The gap has an opening at an end surface of the bearing or at a peripheral surface of the bearing.

[0009] In this case, the above gap preferably has the following shape. That is, ~~as described in claim 2,~~ the gap may be at least one recess stripe provided between an outside member of the sintered compacts and an inside member of the sintered compacts, or the gap may be composed of recess stripes which are provided between the outside member and the inside member and are gear-shaped in a plan view.

[0010] According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the bearing may have a housing, and the bearing and the housing may have the following structures. That is, ~~as described in claim 3,~~ the bearing may have a spherical surface or a chamfer portion at an edge of the peripheral surface on a side of the opening of the gap, so that an angle between the end surface of the bearing and the inside surface of the housing is 45 degrees or less, or an angle between the peripheral surface of the bearing and the inside surface of the housing is 45 degrees or less. Alternatively, ~~as described in claim 4,~~ the bearing may have an outside diameter which is smaller than an inside diameter of the housing, or the bearing may have plural recess stripes provided to an peripheral portion of the bearing so as to extend along the axis, so that another gap is formed between the peripheral surface of the bearing and the inside surface of the housing proximate to the opening of the gap.

[0011] According to a preferred embodiment of the oil-impregnated sintered sliding bearing of the present invention, ~~as described in claim 5,~~ an inside member of the sintered compacts may project along the axis with respect to an outside member of the sintered compacts on a side of the opening of the gap, so that the bearing has a step formed on the side thereof. Alternatively, ~~as described in claim 6,~~ an inside member of the sintered compacts may have a flange portion at an end portion thereof on a side of the opening of the gap, and a ring-shaped gap may be formed among an end surface of the outside member of the sintered compacts, a lower surface of the flange portion of the inside member, and the inside surface of the housing. Alternatively, ~~as described in claim 7,~~ the flange portion of the inside member may have an outside diameter smaller than an inside diameter of the housing, or plural recess stripes may be provided on a peripheral portion of the flange portion so as to extend along the axis, so that another gap is formed between a peripheral surface of the flange portion and the inside surface of the housing.

[0012] According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the bearing may have the following structure on an inside peripheral portion. That is, ~~as described in claim 8,~~ the bearing may have a chamfer portion at an inside peripheral edge at least on a side of the opening of the gap, and may have a tapered shape at an inside peripheral edge of an end portion thereof, so that clearance between an inside peripheral surface of the bearing and a shaft inserted into the bearing at an end portion of a sliding surface is larger than that at a center portion thereof. ~~As described in claim 9,~~ The bearing may have an inside diameter at least at the other end portion opposite to a side of the opening of the gap, the inside diameter being larger than those at portions other than the other end portion, so that clearance between an inside peripheral surface of the bearing and a shaft inserted into the bearing at an end portion of a sliding surface is larger than that at a center portion thereof. ~~As described in~~

~~claim 10, t~~ The large inside diameter portion of the other end portion is formed by the outside member of the sintered compacts.

[0013] According to a preferred embodiment of the oil-impregnated sintered sliding bearing of the present invention, ~~as described in claim 11,~~ an inside member of the sintered compacts may have an open porosity or an average pore diameter, which is smaller than that of the outside member.

Please replace the Abstract with the attached amended Abstract.